

# Committee on Resources

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**Statement of William Rinne  
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Before the  
House Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
On H.R. 4300,  
Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project

June 23, 2004

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am William Rinne, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to be here today to give the Department's views on H.R. 4300, the Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project Act.

Title XVI of the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act (Public Law 102-575) authorized Reclamation to participate in the planning, design and construction of five water reclamation and reuse projects. Reclamation was also authorized to undertake a program to identify other water recycling opportunities throughout the 17 western states, and to conduct appraisal level and feasibility level studies to determine if those opportunities are worthy of implementation. Reclamation has been administering a program to fund these Title XVI projects through cooperative agreements since 1994. Since then Title XVI has been amended several times, and now there are 28 projects authorized for construction in eight states.

H.R. 4300 would again amend Title XVI to authorize Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of improvements to the Eastern Municipal Water District's reclaimed water distribution system in Riverside County, California. It provides for Federal funding not to exceed 25 percent of the total project cost or \$12 million, whichever is less.

The Eastern Municipal Water District's five water reclamation plants typically produce about 40,000 acre-feet per year with an existing capacity of 55,000 acre-feet per year. The reclaimed water is distributed by a gravity flow system primarily serving agricultural users. This project would create a pressurized distribution system suitable for municipal users, including at least four reservoir tanks of about 4 million gallons capacity each, with associated pipelines and pumping stations. The distribution system may also be expanded eastward to serve existing citrus groves. Project benefits include local drought protection and reduced dependence on imported water.

Mr. Chairman, the Department supports efforts to increase reclaimed water use in southern California. However, H.R. 4300 authorizes the design and construction of the project before Reclamation or the project sponsors have completed a feasibility study that meets the requirements of Title XVI. Reclamation requires that feasibility studies be completed first to determine whether these particular projects warrant Federal construction authorization. Therefore the Department believes the legislation to be premature and cannot support H.R. 4300 at this time.

With the tremendous backlog of existing Title XVI projects, we do not support the addition of new projects at this time, especially where, as here, the feasibility phase is not yet finished.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 4300. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.